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ABSTRACT

This guide is designed to provide adult education administrators, teachers, and aides with materials to facilitate the personal and career planning process of their students, specifically in a mutual group support environment. A series of suggested activities promoting the goal of lifelong learning includes the following exercises: (1) group bonding; (2) values clarification; (3) lifeline examination; (4) self assessment; (5) skills assessment; and (6) goal setting. Sample evaluation forms and a bibliography are also provided. Although this program was originally targeted for adult basic education settings, the exercises are equally useful with other educational levels. (Author/HLM)

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# FOCUS ON CHOICE

## A PROGRAM GUIDE

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June, 1979

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## PURPOSE

THIS GUIDE IS DESIGNED TO PROVIDE ADULT EDUCATION ADMINISTRATORS, TEACHERS, AND AIDES WITH MATERIALS WHICH FACILITATE THE PERSONAL AND CAREER PLANNING PROCESS OF THEIR STUDENTS, SPECIFICALLY IN A MUTUAL SUPPORT GROUP ENVIRONMENT. IT PROVIDES A SERIES OF SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES WHICH PROMOTE THE GOAL OF LIFELONG LEARNING. THE ACTIVITIES ARE MEANT TO BE A SOURCE OF DISCUSSION AND CONTENT FOCUS FOR THE PRACTITIONER TO USE WITH STUDENTS IN AN EXISTING ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAM.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The development of materials for use in adult education programs requires that those who will benefit from the material provide input into the design. The materials in this guide have been reviewed and used by both adult educators and students in a variety of programs throughout Indiana.

The project staff thanks both those groups who by virtue of their participation in the mutual support group experience provided us with assistance in refining the materials for a larger population of adult education practitioners. Special thanks are extended to the following program directors who scheduled training workshops on Focus on Choice for their staffs and other community service representatives.

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Focus on Choice secretary

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## PREFACE

The discovery of one's values and goals is a difficult yet crucial part of the lifelong learning process which Focus on Choice supports. When the learning occurs within a supportive group environment, the discovery has a significant impact.

The Fort Wayne Women's Bureau, Inc. a non-profit service corporation, recognized that adults in transition need a framework within which they can develop a focus on all of the personal and professional choices available to them during a stage of assessing their present status and anxiously viewing their future. The rapidly changing status in American society of adult women, and particularly that of the clients receiving services from our agency, has made it abundantly clear that agencies serving adults in transition must provide educational programs that relate to the overlapping personal and collective needs of their clients. Through the process of meeting such needs, the Women's Bureau entered into the realm of adult education.

This program guide is the product of a two-year project which the authors implemented: the first year serving undereducated adult women and the second year conducting staff training to develop and share the basic principles of life planning in a mutual support group context. We found that whether group participants are adults returning to high school or adult education practitioners, the excursion toward personal growth, conducted with peers, is an exciting and beneficial process. It has been both reassuring and challenging to be a part of that process - and to see group participants discover the contradictions of "I'm special" and "I'm not alone."

We did not start that process as experts in adult education or as experts in group facilitation. The experience of conducting life planning workshops, first with adult students and then with adult educators, validated a basic premise of the Focus on Choice project design for us as well as for the participants - e.g. a willingness to be honest and straightforward with one's self engenders that response in others. We have learned that "professional" adult education means being a risk-taker at a personal level.

We hope that this material will provide other adult educators with a format to assist adult learners in the process of self-definition and direction. The ultimate success depends on building a support network in which teacher/facilitator and student/participant are able to assist each other in identifying new ways to grow.

Monica Pugh

Harriet Miller

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# INTRODUCTION

## A. LIFE PLANNING IN ADULT EDUCATION

When was the last time that you asked yourself - "What do I really want do do with my life?" If you are like many adults it has probably been quite awhile since you have taken time to map out a direction, to set goals, to plan your life. Perhaps, it has been even longer since you were able to gather with others who shared a common concern for assessing their personal and career objectives.

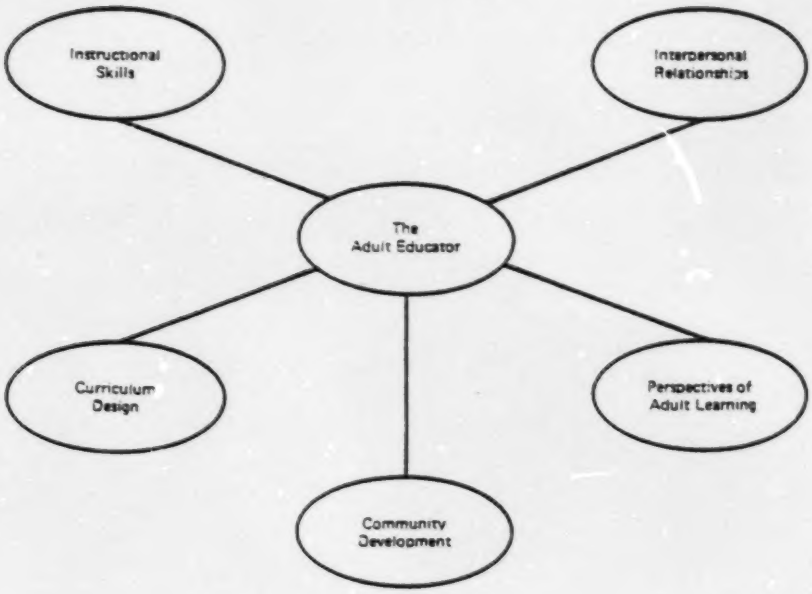
The topic of this program guide is life planning - how to assist adult students to assess their past, present, and future life experiences within the environment of a supportive or peer group. It is an activity which is rapidly gaining support in adult education theory and practice as a fitting complement to the cognitive learning skills needed by under-educated adults. The translation of our common experiences of lifelong learning into a principle of adult education stresses that life planning is an ongoing concern from adolescence until old age.

Even within popular self help books on the mass market, it is apparent that a consciousness of periodic personal and career changes is common to adult life. A major life transition often occurs when adults re-enter formal education, whether it is a return to the basic, secondary, or postsecondary level. Practitioners serving under-educated adults can and often do become involved as potential change agents in counseling adult students about personal and career alternatives. A program such as Focus on Choice is designed to offer the adult educator with a means of providing a format and structure in which adult students can "counsel" each other.

Life planning is a timely concern for practitioners committed to the delivery of relevant educational services to the undereducated adult.

**LIFELONG LEARNING IS**

**PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL GROWTH**




A commitment to Adult Education is a commitment to learning for self and others.

The accompanying chart relects five competency areas identified by adult educators in a staff development project recently conducted in Florida. At least two of the areas relate directly to the topic of life planning - Interpersonal Relationships and Perspectives of Adult Learning. What the developers of the chart recognized is that an adult educator's competence in assisting students in their educational and personal growth hinges on a commitment to developing skills and to gaining experience in the process personally,e.g. the practitioner who is aware of his/her own

Reproduced from: Alternatives for Staff Development of Adult Educators, Boca Raton,Fl. 33431: College of Education, Florida Atlantic University,1978.

growth potential will make a positive impact on the adult learner's efforts to become aware of theirs. Conducting a life planning project will involve the practitioner more intensely than other instructional activities, but it will also provide a meaningful reward based on the mutual benefits of sharing a growth - enriching process.

As mentioned in the Preface, these specific exercises have been tested with a variety of groups in adult education. The experience has never failed to be one in which participants made immediate connections to the concept and to what others were saying. As with most important revelations, it is paradoxically simple and complex. The participants and facilitators learn about their own obstacles to growth, their values, and goals, as they learn about others. Conducting life planning programs with adults almost guarantees a mutually beneficial experience.

## B. DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

The activities contained in the program design are intended for use by adult education practitioners with undereducated adults, e.g. those with less than a high school diploma or its equivalent. The implementation of the program is most effective when the sessions are conducted in an informal mutual support group setting. The practitioner assumes the role of group facilitator which implies a slightly different approach than that taken in a purely instructional program. Following are the definitions of concepts used throughout this guide and some general suggestions on applying the mutual support group format in adult basic education programs.

### 1. MUTUAL SUPPORT GROUP

#### a. DEFINITION

A group of individuals who meet to address common life experiences and plans in an informal environment with the goal of obtaining and providing emotional and practical support.

REFINED DEFINITION FOR ABE:

A group of ABE students (current or potential) who meet to address the shared experience of school re-entry and its impact on their personal and career life patterns.

#### b. CHARACTERISTICS OF A MUTUAL SUPPORT GROUP

| | |
|---|---|
| GROUP SIZE | 5-15 persons |
| COMPOSITION | diverse backgrounds with one common experience of major importance (education, employment, family status, etc.) |
| HOW ENROLLED | voluntary, with encouragement from ABE personnel (teacher or counselor). |
| TIME FRAME | per session - 30-90 minutes<br>per series - 5-10 sessions |
| PARTICIPANT TURNOVER | need stability with a core group - some participants will enter and exit based on their own needs. |

| | |
|---|---|
| FACILITATED BY | ABE teacher, para-professional, or volunteer who can relate to small group in a flexible non-judgemental manner (See role of facilitator). |
| GOAL | to provide a means and a format for participants to engage in activities and discussions designed to enhance their level of self-esteem and improve their ability to set realistic life goals. |
| ACTIVITIES | self-assessment exercises, role-playing, assertive training, films, values clarification, problem - solving (all written and experiental activities are designed to stimulate discussion among participants). |

2. VALUE OF MUTUAL SUPPORT GROUP TO ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAMS

   a. Teachers will spend less time on individual counseling when there is a format established for participants to "counsel" each other.

   b. A mutual support group open to those not in an ABE program can help in recruiting participants to adult education.

   c. A mutual support group comprised of ABE students will help the retention rate of the program by stimulating the goal-orientation of the learner.

   d. When facilitated by ABE personnel, the group activities and discussions provides a positive link between ABE and students.

   e. Conducting a life planning program provides a positive link among students, helping to decrease the isolation sometimes experienced by individual learners.

   f. Finally, the program provides a positive link between the ABE program and other community agencies.

3. HOW SUCCESS OF A MUTUAL SUPPORT GROUP IN A.B.E. CAN BE BLOCKED

   a. When the program is used only for recruitment of students into the academic program. A non-judgemental undertone and a certain amount of distance from academic activities is needed.

   b. When life planning is used as group therapy. Mutual support groups in ABE are not for severely troubled individuals.

c. When a mutual support group is conducted where there is a lack of administrative or staff support for the concept.

d. When the program is conducted by facilitators who rely totally on materials and structured activities. Flexibility and a sincere interest in group members is a requirement. It is best if done by a facilitator who was "in transition" at some point in life (peer not professional counselors).

e. When the program is run indefinitely. There should be a definite time span, otherwise the facilitator will burn-out and the group will rely more on the program than is desirable for achieving independence.

f. When joining a mutual support group is a requirement. Mutual support groups are not needed by many students who are in the program to learn academic skills only.

4. ROLE OF FACILITATOR - DIFFERENCES FROM TRADITIONAL INSTRUCTOR'S ROLE

a. The source of learning varies. It is not the total responsibility of the teacher.

b. No grading is required. There are no rights and wrongs. Assessment is a process of self-evaluation combined with supportive feedback from other participants.

c. Group participation means interacting with several persons, not with individuals, as is common in many adult educational learning centers.

d. Planned agendas and curriculum sequences often aren't met. Materials are used only as discussion starters - not as concepts in and of themselves which need to be memorized or learned. Be flexible.

e. Listening skills are a necessity.

f. Group members <u>support</u> each other - competition among individuals is kept at a minimum.

g. Non-academic educational material is used. It serves the regular academic program by increasing motivation and raising self-esteem of participants.

h. The facilitator shares part of her/his personal experience. She/he is willing to be at the same level of involvement in discussions and activities as that of participants.

i. Expect to learn through mistakes. A good facilitator is not a perfectionist.

Although these guidelines suggest a difference in approach, it is important to note that extensive training in how to become a facilitator is not necessary. The principles of adult learning which are already present in the approach of most practitioners are most appropriate to the mutual support group setting. Credentials and competence in facilitating the group process develops with experience, not classroom training.

A helpful way to initiate and conduct a group is to join with another facilitator to share the role. This provides a means to avoid being totally responsible for guiding the participants as well as a means of increasing the potential for involving more members of the group during discussions.

5. SETTING THE SCENE

An important ingredient to ensure that the group shares in the responsibility to conduct each session and the whole program successfully is the development of "ground rules for group interaction." It is recommended that such ground rules be developed at the beginning of the first session. Herewith are some suggested concerns which were used during Focus on Choice.

GROUND RULES FOR GROUP INTERACTION

Responsibility is everyone's regarding activity planning, participation, and evaluation.

All replies of each group member are taken seriously . . . i.e. respect is required for each other's ideas and participation.

The facilitator is not the sole authority . . .everyone brings specialized knowledge by virtue of his/her own experience.

The physical setting allows everyone to have visual contact with the group . . .i.e. seating is in a circle or around a table.

Program content and curriculum is flexible to meet the needs of the group. Participants are also responsible for bringing in resources which relate to the group interest.

Decision on freedom of movement in and out of session for breaks, etc. are made by the group, not by the facilitator, "Permission to speak" (holding up a hand) should be discouraged.

It is the responsibility of the group members to accept any or all of the above or add additional rules. The facilitator's role is one of assuring that there is consensus on the rules.

This type of initiation into the learning process is new to some practitioners since, traditionally, structured education assumes that the teacher is providing information to learners who have the responsibility to become adept at a particular subject. However, facilitation of life planning is most successful and beneficial when the ABE program represnetative clearly articulates the idea that responsibility and authority for learning are shared among all group members. Recognizing that the last experience with formal education which many undereducated adults had was not a positive one, facilitators should expect that many participants will need a lot of encouragement to exercise their responsibility for group decision making and discussion.

As participants and facilitators become familiar with this concept, they will provide a wealth of resources based on their life experiences from which the entire group can learn.

## C. FORMAT OF THE GUIDE

The core section of the guide, Program Design, contains exercises which help focus the group on six basic categories of questions, all of which seek to relate the personal to the collective process. A strong emphasis is place on positive self-assessment and outlook with the facilitator encouraging active involvement by everyone.

The particular activities described in the program design are not original; however, the application to an adult education setting is innovative. A bibliography contains sources of these and similar exercises, all of which may be adapted for a Focus on Choice program.

Although we have found the best results can be obtained by following the sequence of topics contained in the Program Design, the exercises can be used independently or in a different order. In addition, some adult education practitioners have found that, in the absence of a group environment, the exercises can be helpful to use with individual students who need specialized attention. Facilitators are encouraged to experiment with the design they consider to be best suited to their students and program needs.

For each activity there are detailed directions for the facilitator to review prior to the sessions. The descriptions of each exercise follows a basic format which includes the exercise goal, duration, materials needed, directions, variations, and additonal activities. The additional activity simply refers the reader to the third section of the guide which has two categories of exercises - self-assessment and career planning. Some of the specific activities in the third section are appropriate to use in

conjunction with a particular topic, e.g. the exercise entitled Attitudes Toward Work complements the exercise contained in What Is Important To Me?

Participant handouts accompany exercises and can be used as a master to obtain copies for all group members. No page numbers have been placed on the handouts. Pages with a solid black line on the right margin identify participant handouts. Facilitators should complete the exercise along with participants and be prepared to share her/his response. This decreases the distance between the facilitator and participant as well as reinforcing the "peer" aspect essential to the process.

The final section of the guide contains additional activities to use with a Focus on Choice program. Participant handouts also accompany facilitator's directions for each exercise. Finally, sample evaluation forms and a bibliography are included for the consideration of potential users of this guide.

# PROGRAM DESIGN

GUIDELINES IN FORMING THE GROUP

RECRUITMENT

Participants for a life planning series can be recruited from the community at large or can be drawn from the existing Adult Basic Education Program. A community wide campaign has the additional advantage of introducing potential students to the other services of your program.

For community wide recruitment, design a flier or brochure that states what you plan to do; where it will be located; when the sessions will take place; cost; and whom to contact for registration. Disseminate the information sheets to other community service agencies, adult educational programs and organizations such as Parents Without Partners, women's groups, etc. which provide services to adults in transition. The media is an important support system for disseminating information. Send your information sheet with an explanatory cover letter to the local newspapers and the radio and television stations. Request a feature on your program or inclusion in the public service announcements.

When offering the life planning series to students currently enrolled in your adult education program, the combination of circulating an information sheet with followup personal contact made by teachers is the most effective method. Point out to the students the benefits for them in setting aside time to do self assessment with a peer group. Use your influence to convince those students whom you feel are the best candidates for the series. Encourage them to try it out by attending the first of the series.

IMPORTANCE OF FIRST SESSION

The first session of the series is very important in determining the success of the program. Begin by congratulating everyone for having the foresight and courage to begin the process of self-assessment and goal-setting. Assure them chat what they do in this group is for their personal growth, that all written exercises belong to them and will not be collected. Participants should be free to participate as little or as much as they choose. This is different from a traditional learning situation because in life planning there are no authorities and no right or wrong answers. The group gathers as peers to share life experiences and to learn from each other.

GROUP COMPOSITION

It was our experience that a group with varied ability levels, ages, socio-economic status and job interests enhanced the dynamics of peer support. The one common thread - lack of a high school diploma - was sufficient to create a bond. When emphasis is placed on career planning a lot of information about job opportunities comes from the group inself. What one person may not regard as valuable the next person might see as "the perfect job for me" thus creating a network of information as well as a network of support.

GROUP STABILITY

While attendance by a core group of approximately 10 people is important for continuity, this format works well even when a few people drop out or enter after the series has begun. Some people's needs are met with

one session; others need the experience of the whole series to get the support they need in making important decisions. Some will join after hearing about the group from a friend. Word of mouth recruitment is very common after the first session. Remember that the participants are better judges of the number of sessions which they need than those who plan the series.

Following are six basic exercises which constitute the core program design. The sequence of the exercises begins with a group awareness exercise; proceeds through values clarification, lifeline, self-assessment, skills assessment; and ends with goal-setting.

???

# WHY AM I IN THIS GROUP?

GOAL To introduce participants to the process of group sharing, to each other, and to identify their expectations about planned activities.

DURATION 20-40 minutes.

MATERIALS Chalk board or flip chart.

DIRECTIONS

Have participants introduce themselves to a partner and share responses to three of the following statements, with the understanding that they will present each other's responses to the entire group.

What appeals to me about this program is . . .

What I expect to gain from this experience is . . .

One major change in my life over the past five years is . . .

I am good at . . .

Allow about 3-5 minutes for participants to talk to each other, then have each participant introduce his/her partner by name to the group, sharing the responses to the statements. The facilitator should record on the board in front of the group the answers to the last question which everyone answered.

The facilitator initiates discussion based upon the expressed common concerns; answers any questions raised about the planned agenda and participants' expectations; and shares her/his own responses to the selected statements.

VARIATION

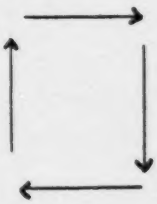
1. Self introduction can be used instead of partners when the group size is small.

2. Break large groups into smaller groupings of five or less when there are 25 or more participants. Have one person in each subgroup serve as spokesperson.

3. Additional statements or questions can be designed to meet the specific concerns or needs of the group.

EXPECTED OUTCOME

This exercise is designed to involve the participants in identifying both personal and group goals for the program. It also serves as an immediate group bonding technique since students get an opportunity to recognize their common experiences and reactions to changes in their personal lives. The facilitator receives feedback on the expectations of the group and has an opportunity to respond to concerns or questions raised during the discussion.



# WHAT IS IMPORTANT TO ME?

GOAL To provide participants with an opportunity to initiate values clarification.

DURATION Part I, 10-15 minutes; Part II, 45-60 minutes.

MATERIALS Part I, 3"x5" index card for each participant; Part II, participants' handouts: "Values Clarification", "Values Auction", and "Values Auction Key."

DIRECTIONS: PART I

| | |
|---|---|
| *2. Who I must please* | *3. How I feel about my present job/ education* |
| *1. Name* | *VALUES CARD TRICK* |
| *4. What I want out of education/a job ideally* | *5. What I am willing to do to get it* |

Have group members fill in the information on their individual cards as the facilitator reads the questions. This is meant to be a short exercise during which the participants should be encouraged to put down the first responses which come to mind.

Allow only 45 seconds to one minute for participants to record their responses to each question. Ask participants to answer question No. 3, "How I feel about my present job/education", with adjectives as responses. After completion, encourage group participation by repeating question No. 2 and asking for spontaneous feedback from the group at large. Ask them to call out their answers. Repeat this process for the remaining three questions. Encourage the participants to compare and contrast their responses with one another.

EXPECTED OUTCOME: PART I

Answers to questions No. 2 and No. 3 give participants information about what is important to them personally and what their personal environment is like. No. 4 and No. 5 are goal setting and values clarification questions. The sharing of these exercise responses, again, reinforces a comparative experience within the group.

DIRECTIONS: PART II

1. Give each participant the handout, "Values Clarification",and ask him/her to rank the list of personal values. Allow about ten minutes for them to complete the sheet.
2. Next, distribute the handout, "Values Auction", and explain that each of the items on this sheet will be auctioned off to the highest bidder. Each person will have $5,000 for the auction, and should be told to take a few minutes to budget the amount she/he plans to spend on any given item. Participants can spend the money alloted on one item or on as many as they wish, as long as they stay within their $5,000 budget.

3. The facilitator becomes the auctioneer and begins with any item on the auction sheet. It is best to proceed randomly rather than from top to bottom in the order the items are listed.

The facilitator says: "We are ready to begin the auction. Before we begin, let me make some comments. First, you may bid on any item you wish as long as you do not spend more than $5,000. Second, when you have bought an item, that money is gone from your budget. If you bid and do not get an item, you can use the money budgeted on another item of your choice. Third, please enter the highest amount you bid on any item in the middle column of your sheet. Finally, enter the top bid that bought each item in the last column on your sheet. We will be bidding in increments of $50.00. Now let us begin. Who will open the bidding at $50.00 for . . .?"

4. When the auction has been completed, distribute the sheets, "Values Auction Key." Let the participants compare the values they bought, or bid for, with the values they ranked high on the "Values Clarification" handout. Is there any similarity between the two sets of values? If so, where?

VARIATION: PART II

Comprise a list of items together, as a group, before auctioning them off. Include items of special interest to adult learners, e.g. G.E.D., Speed-reading, math ability, special tutoring, etc.

EXPECTED OUTCOME: PART II

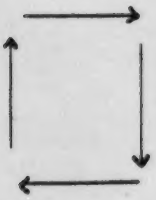
The ranking of values is considered a rational approach to values clarification. The bidding process is considered an emotional approach.

Participants can see how their values compare to those of others in the group, as well as viewing how their planned bid for a specific value item changes when that bid must compete with other bids from individuals who may place a higher value on the item. An additional outcome for adult education students is practice in applying simple budgeting and arithmetic skills to the exercise.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES Journal Writing, Attitudes Toward Work, Why Do I Work?

*The "Values Auction" directions were reproduced from:*

*Khosh, Mary N., A Career Planning Program for Women: The Experience CUE. Washington D.C.: National Association for Women Deans, Administrators, and Counselors, 1977.*



# WHAT IS IMPORTANT TO ME?

VALUES CLARIFICATION

Mark your preferences in rank order:

| Values | Rank |
|---|---|
| Health | ( ) |
| Religion | ( ) |
| Security | ( ) |
| Family | ( ) |
| Travel | ( ) |
| Aesthetics | ( ) |
| Power | ( ) |
| Marriage | ( ) |
| Justice | ( ) |
| Recognition, Approval | ( ) |
| Honesty | ( ) |
| Love | ( ) |
| Personal Autonomy, Freedom | ( ) |
| Friendship | ( ) |
| Emotional Well-Being | ( ) |
| Appearance | ( ) |
| Knowledge, Wisdom | ( ) |
| Pleasure | ( ) |
| Altruism, Social Welfare | ( ) |
| Achievement | ( ) |

*From: A Career Planning Program for Women: The Experience Cue.*
*(See Bibliography)*

VALUES AUCTION

| | Amount I Budgeted | Amount I Bid | Top Bid |
|---|---|---|---|
| A satisfying and fulfilling marriage | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| A way to do your own thing without hassling | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| The Presidency | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| The love and admiration of the whole world | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| Unlimited travel and tickets to any concert, play, opera, or ballet | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| Complete self-confidence with a positive outlook on life | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| A happy family relationship | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| To be the most attractive person in the world | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| To live to be 100 with no illness | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| The most complete library of great books for your own private use | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| Harmony with God | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| Time with nothing to do but enjoy yourself with all needs and desires automatically met | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| To be the richest person in the world | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| A house overlooking the most beautiful view in the world | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| A chance to rid the world of prejudice | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| A chance to serve the sick and needy | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| The perfect love affair | _____ | _____ | _____ |

VALUES AUCTION *continued*

| | Amount I Budgeted | Amount I Bid | Top Bid |
|---|---|---|---|
| To master the profession of your choice | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| To be voted outstanding person of the year and praised in every newspaper in the world | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| Perfect insight into the meaning of life | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| A way to rid the world of unfairness, graft, and lying | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| A chance to set your own working conditions | _____ | _____ | _____ |

*From: A Career Planning Program for Women: The Experience Cue.*
*(See Bibliography)*

VALUES AUCTION KEY

| | |
|---|---|
| A satisfying and fulfilling marriage | Marriage |
| A way to do your own thing without hassling | Personal Autonomy |
| The Presidency | Power |
| The love and admiration of the whole world | Love/Approval<br>Friendship |
| Unlimited travel and tickets to any concert, play, opera, or ballet | Pleasure<br>Travel<br>Aesthetics |
| Complete self-confidence with a positive outlook on life | Emotional Well-Being |
| A happy family relationship | Family |
| To be the most attractive person in the world | Appearance |
| To live to be 100 with no illness | Health |
| The most complete library of great books for your own private use | Knowledge |
| Harmony with God | Religion |
| Time with nothing to do but enjoy yourself with all needs and desires automatically met | Pleasure |
| To be the richest person in the world | Security |
| A house overlooking the most beautiful view in the world | Aesthetics<br>Achievement |
| A chance to rid the world of prejudice | Justice |
| A chance to serve the sick and needy | Altruism |
| The perfect love affair | Love |
| To master the profession of your choice | Achievement |
| To be voted outstanding person of the year and praised in every newspaper in the world | Recognition<br>Approval |
| Perfect insight into the meaning of life | Wisdom |
| A way to rid the world of unfairness, graft, and lying | Honesty |
| A chance to set your own working conditions | Personal Autonomy |

# WHAT'S MY LINE?

GOAL To guide the participants into an examination of major life events with emphasis upon their individual roles in the decisions which shaped their lives.

DURATION 20-40 minutes.

MATERIALS Participant handout, "Lifeline."

DIRECTIONS

Introduce the concept of lifelines as a graphic representation of decisions, events and actions that influence the shape of one's life. Reassure the participants that there are no "right" or "wrong" approaches to charting their lives. Frequently, a lifeline identifies disturbing contradictions, i.e. a spouse's promotion may signify a low point for the participant. Group members need to be reminded it is their lifeline and that they owe themselves honest responses so the exercise will be significant for them. Promote open-ended discussion by asking for reactions to: "What did this exercise reveal to you?" Create a non-judgemental atmosphere by encouraging mutual support and respect for every response. Encourage interaction among the participants.

To generate further discussion, ask the participants to review their lifelines and mark: "Where you took the greatest risk" (!), "Where you met an obstacle which stopped you from getting or doing what you wanted" (x),

"Where a critical decision was made for you by someone else" (o), "At the point of the best decision you've ever made" (+), "At the point of the worst decision you've ever made" (-), and "Where you see an important decision coming up in the future" (?). Group sharing of these responses ( and all others ) should always be optional for the participants. The facilitator may need to begin such discussions with her/his own responses. Care should be taken by the facilitator not to dominate discussion, however.

VARIATION

One can draw a career lifeline or a personal lifeline. Begin by drawing the lifeline of a significant friend or family member and then compare that to one's own life chart. This exercise may be done periodically and the different chart shapes which may emerge can be compared. Re-charting the lifeline may be particularly effective if repeated at the end of this series of life planning sessions to determine the changes that may have occurred in one's own perspective.

EXPECTED OUTCOME

This can be a powerful exercise, particularly when the emphasis is upon the personal responsibility one has for influencing, or not influencing, the major events of one's life. With this recognition, comes an awareness of the importance of goal development to ensure control over one's future. Another recurring outcome is the recognition by participants of the similarities of their personal major events. For instance, adult education learners often view their experience of leaving school before graduation as a major event. This common experience can be the focal point for discussing how that one event shapes many others, now and in the future.

# WHAT'S MY LINE?

LIFELINE

Most lifelines are different, or at least they're shaped by different events and different actions or decisions. How many of the actions that shaped your own lifeline resulted from choices you made, and how many from choices others made for you? Is there evidence of action you've taken without really making a decision - that is, something you did simply because it was expected of you?

In the lifeline chart above, let the left edge of the box represent the beginning of your life and the right edge represent the end of your life. Using the pattern of a business progress chart, draw a line in the box that shows your past, present, and future.

Put (!) where you took the greatest risk of your life.

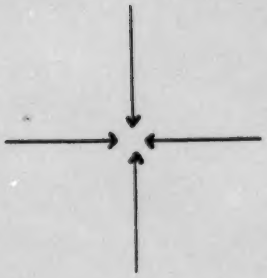
Put (x) where you met an obstacle which stopped you from getting or doing what you wanted.

Put (o) where a critical decision was made for you by someone else.

Put (+) at the point of the best decision you ever made.

Put (-) at the point of the worst decision you ever made.

Put (?) where you see an important decision coming up in the future.



# WHO AM I?

GOAL To help the participants identify their multiple roles and qualities and to prioritize their definitions.

DURATION 20-30 minutes.

MATERIALS Participant handout, "Who Am I"

DIRECTIONS

Read aloud the introductory paragraph on the participants' handout. Allow about ten minutes for the individuals to complete the exercise. After they have written ten responses, read the second paragraph of the handout aloud. Allow about five minutes for participants to rank their responses, acknowledging the difficulty of the task. Then ask the participants to select three of their responses to share with the group, discussing what rank they gave those items and why they selected the items at all. Sharing of responses with the group should be voluntary. The facilitator may have to begin the discussion by sharing her/his responses first.

VARIATION

1. Repeating the exercise, limit the participants to responses which are adjectives, action verbs, or roles (nouns).
2. After completing the exercise, have participants respond to specific statements, such as: "I am discovering that . . .", "I used to be . . .", and/or "Now I am . . ."

3. Have participants answer the question of who they are through the perspective of a spouse or good friend. Compare the responses.

EXPECTED OUTCOME

Ordinarily, participants will rank their positive attributes highly. This is significant and should be noted by the facilitator. If not specifically directed, the participants will be "stuck" on categorizing themselves in family roles only. When this happens, ask for adjectives. The sharing process generates new ways to identify oneself.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES Journal Writing

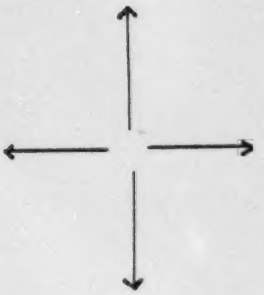
# WHO AM I?

SELF ASSESSMENT

In the space below write ten different responses to the question, "Who am I?" Write your responses in whatever way you think of yourself. Your framework for thinking of yourself may be the roles you have in your life, the positive and negative qualities you have, your skills and attributes, or several of these. Whatever your framework, find ten different answers to "Who am I?" and write them, in no particular order.

Now that you have ten statements describing yourself as you see yourself, think about what life would be like if you excluded one of the ten. Would you still be essentially the same person or not? In order to be more specific about this, rank your statements from 1 to 10. At the top of the ranking keep those statements that are most essentially you - those you could least do without. At the bottom of the ranking put those qualities you described that you could most easily do without.

# WHAT CAN I DO?



GOAL To identify skills which the participants already possess, with emphasis upon categorizing life experience skills.

DURATION. There are twelve skill categories in this exercise. Each category takes approximately 15-20 minutes to complete.

MATERIALS Participant handout, "Skills Assessment."

DIRECTIONS

Ask participants to search their memories for positive experiences and to write these thoughts down. The group members should be encouraged to be open and honest and not to hold back satisfying moments they remember for fear of being considered boastful. After each participant has listed several positive experiences, direct them to share their lists with one another. This can be a rewarding experience that helps to promote positive feelings among the group members and enhance the self concept of each individual in the group. Go over the instructions for the participant handout, "Skills Assessment", and then suggest the exercises be completed at home, with someone who knows them well - perhaps a supportive friend or family member - to help refresh their memories. Also suggest that the exercise be completed in sections.

After all the sections of the "Skills Assessment" have been completed, help the participants find the patterns of individual interests and skill experiences which are uniquely "them." This exercise aids them to discover what skills they possess which are transferable to job-related areas. The exercise also serves as a confidence-builder by emphasizing which skills one enjoys as well as the skills one has. Such an exercise validates an adult's involvement in everyday tasks.

VARIATION

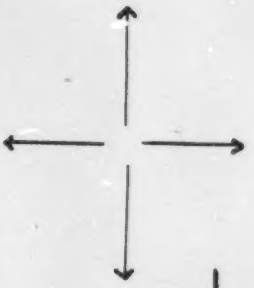
This exercise is effective with individuals or with group situations. A logical companion exercise would be to ask the participants to conduct independent research that would determine the job categories in which their personal skills are applicable.

EXPECTED OUTCOME

This exercise provides the participant with a vocabulary which can be used in designing a resume or preparing for a job interview. Participants will realize that they possess skills which, in many instances, can be directly applied to their educational and employment goals.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES Resume Writing and Mock Interview.

# WHAT CAN I DO?



SKILLS ASSESSMENT

What can you offer others: employer, school, volunteer agency, family, or community?

To help you review your experiences, four scales have been provided for rating a number of specific skill areas. The scales are:

How Often?

5 means "Almost always"
4 means "Frequently"
3 means "Occasionally"
2 means "Rarely"
1 means "Never"

How Well?

5 means "Very well"
4 means "Well"
3 means "Okay"
2 means "Just fair"
1 means "Badly"

How Recently?

5 means "Currently" or "recently"
4 means"Within the past 5 years"
3 means "Within the past 10 years"
2 means "Within the past 20 years"
1 means "More than 20 years ago"

How Much Did You Enjoy It?

5 means "Very much"
4 means "Quite a bit"
3 means "Somewhat"
2 means "Just a little"
1 means "Not at all"

Read each skill and example of the situation where that skill is used and in the adjacent columns write the number that best describes your experience. (If a statement refers to something you have never done, in the first column enter the "1" that means "never" and skip the other column entries for that statement.)

SKILLS ASSESSMENT

| Name of Skill | Situation Example | How Often | How Well | How Recently | How Much Enjoyed |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A. Using My Hands | | | | | |
| 1. assembling | kits | | | | |
| 2. constructing | carpentry | | | | |
| 3. building | | | | | |
| 4. operating tools | drills, mixers | | | | |
| 5. operating machinery | sewing machine | | | | |
| 6. operating equipment | trucks<br>station wagons | | | | |
| 7. manual or finger dexterity | throwing<br>sewing | | | | |
| 8. precision or speed handling | assembly line | | | | |
| 9. fixing or repairing | autos, mending | | | | |
| 10. other | | | | | |
| B. Using My Body | | | | | |
| 1. muscular coordination | skiing, gymnastics | | | | |
| 2. being physically active | exercising, hiking | | | | |
| 3. doing outdoor activities | camping | | | | |
| 4. other | | | | | |

SKILLS ASSESSMENT

| Name of Skill | Situation Example | How Often | How Well | How Recently | How much Enjoyed |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| C. Using Words | | | | | |
| 1. reading | books with understanding | | | | |
| 2. copying | manuscripts skillfully | | | | |
| writing 3. communicating | letters interestingly | | | | |
| talking 4. speaking | telephone interestingly | | | | |
| teaching 5. training | in front of groups with animation | | | | |
| 6. editing | improving a child's sentences | | | | |
| 7. memory for words | remembering people's names, book titles | | | | |
| 8. other | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| D. Using My Senses (Eyes, Ears, Nose, Taste, Touch) | | | | | |
| surveying 1. observing | watching something with the eyes | | | | |
| inspecting 2. examining | looking at a child's bumps | | | | |
| diagnosing 3. determining | deciding if food is cooked yet | | | | |
| showing attention 4. to detail | shopping sewing | | | | |
| 5. Other | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| E. Using Numbers | | | | | |
| 1. taking inventory | in the pantry in the shop | | | | |
| 2. counting | in the classroom bureau drawers | | | | |
| calculating 3. computing | checkbook arithmetic | | | | |

SKILLS ASSESSMENT

| Name of Skill | Situation Example | How Often | How Well | How Recently | How Much Enjoyed |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| E. Using Numbers *continued* | | | | | |
| 4. keeping financial records, bookkeeping | budget | | | | |
| 5. managing money | checking account<br>bank, store | | | | |
| 6. developing a budget | for the family | | | | |
| 7. number memory | telephone numbers | | | | |
| 8. rapid number manipulation | doing arithmetic in head | | | | |
| 9. other | | | | | |
| F. Using Intuition | | | | | |
| 1. showing foresight | planning ahead<br>predicting consequences | | | | |
| 2. sizing up person or situation | all details, not just one or two | | | | |
| 3. having insight | why people act the way they do | | | | |
| 4. acting on gut reactions | making decisions<br>trusting someone | | | | |
| 5. visualizing third dimension | drawings, models<br>blueprints<br>membory for faces | | | | |
| 6. other | | | | | |
| G. Using Analytic Thinking or Logic | | | | | |
| 1. researching information gathering | finding a certain street in a strange city | | | | |
| 2. analyzing dissecting | incredients in recipe<br>material | | | | |
| 3. classifying organizing | laundry | | | | |

SKILLS ASSESSMENT

| Name of Skill | Situation Example | How Often | How Well | How Recently | How Much Enjoyed |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| G. Using Analytic Thinking or Logic *continued* | | | | | |
| 4. problem solving | how to get to a place | | | | |
| separating important 5. from unimportant | complaints cleaning attic | | | | |
| 6. diagnosing | cause and effect problem sources | | | | |
| systematizing 7. things in order | laying out tools or utensils in order | | | | |
| comparing 8. seeing similarities | different brands in the supermarket | | | | |
| testing 9. screening | cooking, deciding what to wear | | | | |
| reviewing 10. evaluating | how to improve something you've made | | | | |
| 11. other | | | | | |
| H. Using Originality or Creativity | | | | | |
| 1. imaginative imagining | new ways to do things make uo stories | | | | |
| inventing 2. creating | processes, products figures, words | | | | |
| designing 3. developing | new recipes new gadgets | | | | |
| improvising 4. experiments | camping when you've forgotten something | | | | |
| adapting 5. improving | fixing something that doesn't work | | | | |
| 6. other | | | | | |

SKILLS ASSESSMENT

| Name of Skill | Situation Example | How Often | How Well | How Recently | How Much Enjoyed |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I. Using Helpfulness | | | | | |
| 1. helping being of service | when someone is in need | | | | |
| 2. sensitivity to others' feelings | in heated discussion or argument | | | | |
| 3. listening | | | | | |
| 4. developing rapport | with stranger | | | | |
| 5. showing warmth caring | with someone who is ill or upset | | | | |
| 6. understanding | when someone tells how they feel | | | | |
| 7. drawing out people | when someone is reluctant to talk | | | | |
| 8. offering support | someone alone facing difficulty | | | | |
| 9. demonstrating empathy | weeping with those who weep | | | | |
| 10. representing others' wishes accurately | telling other parent what their child wants | | | | |
| 11. motivating | getting people to act or past hang-ups | | | | |
| 12. sharing credit appreciation | when working in teams | | | | |
| 13. raising others' self-esteem | make another feel better, less guilty | | | | |
| 14. healing, curing | physical, spiritual, emotional ailments | | | | |
| 15. counseling guiding | when someone doesn't know what to do | | | | |
| 16. other | | | | | |
| J. Using Artistic Abilities | | | | | |
| 1. composing music | | | | | |
| 2. playing instrument singing | | | | | |

SKILLS ASSESSMENT

| Name of Skill | Situation Example | How Often | How Well | How Recently | How Much Enjoyed |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| J. Using Artistic Abilities *continued* | | | | | |
| 3. fashioning, shaping things, materials | handicrafts sculpturing | | | | |
| 4. symbols, images | jewelry stained glass | | | | |
| spaces, shapes 5. faces | photography, art architecture | | | | |
| 6. colors | painting, decorating making clothing | | | | |
| give meaning with 7. body, voice, face | acting, dancing public speaking | | | | |
| drawing 8. painting | artwork | | | | |
| 9. word images | poetry playwriting | | | | |
| 10. other | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| K. Using Leadership, Being Up Front | | | | | |
| 1. begin new tasks, ideas, projects | start a group or clothing drive | | | | |
| first move in a 2. relationship | with stranger | | | | |
| 3. organizing | Scout troop, team game at picnic | | | | |
| leading 4. directing others | field trip cheerleading | | | | |
| 5. promoting change | in family, club, or community | | | | |
| 6. making decisions | when decision affects others | | | | |
| 7. taking risks | sticking up for someone in fight | | | | |
| performing 8. before a group | demonstrate product lecture, entertain | | | | |
| selling, promoting 9. negotiating | product, idea garage sale | | | | |
| 10. other | | | | | |

SKILLS ASSESSMENT

| Name of Skill | Situation Example | How Often | How Well | How Recently | How Much Enjoyed |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| L. Using Follow-Through | | | | | |
| 1. using what others have developed | working with a kit | | | | |
| 2. using plans, instructions | picking up children on schedule | | | | |
| 3. attending to details | embroidering a design | | | | |
| 4. classifying, filing recording, retrieving | data, materials, ideas letters, information | | | | |
| 5. other | | | | | |

*Adapted from: Bolles, Richard N. and Zenoff, Victoria B., The Quick Job Hunting Map, Berkeley, California: Ten Speed Press, 1977. Khosh, Mary N., A Career Planning Program for Women: The Experience CUE, Washington D.C.: National Association for Women Deans, Administrators, and Counselors, 1977.*

# WHAT DO I WANT TO DO?

GOAL To help participants identify tangible short-range goals.

DURATION 45-60 minutes.

MATERIALS Participant handouts, "Goal Setting" (I, II, III, IV) and "Aids to Successful Goal Setting."

DIRECTIONS

1. Ask participants to define, in their own words, what a GOAL means to them. Encourage them to provide examples of the different types of goals, i.e. personal, job-related, educational, leisure time, short-range, long-range, etc. Talk briefly about a goal you have set, either attained or not attained. One definition of a goal, which could be presented to the group, is: "Goals are statements of the general outcome one desires. To be attainable, goals should be realistic and meaningful. They should be based upon an understanding of yourself, including your values, interests, strengths, and weaknesses."
2. After defining the meaning of "goal", direct the participants' attention to the handout exercises. Read the directions, aloud, of each of the participant handouts (Parts I, II, III, IV) and allow ten minutes for the group to complete each section of the exercise. Upon completion of each part, allow time for group sharing. The sharing of goals implies a commitment by each participant. Designate a time in the future to review everyone's progress toward their individual goals.

3. In these exercises, the emphasis is upon future goal setting in which one considers all alternatives, lists priorities, sets realistic timetables, weighs advantages and disadvantages as well as expectations for accomplishments. Start the goal setting series of exercises with short-term goals to be accomplished within one month.

4. Direct participants to consult the "Aids to Successful Goal Setting" sheet and their personal skills assessment chart for help in completing the four exercises.

VARIATION

Have participants pair up with one other group member and exchange their written goals with one another. They should arrange to contact one another at the time each has designated as a goal conpletion date. At the time of this meeting, they should discuss, not only whether the goal was achieved, but also how it felt to be working toward a specific objective. If the goal was not achieved, ask them to assess if the goal, as identified, was appropriate to their skills and values. It is not always a personal inability that defeats goals; sometimes, it is simply an inappropriate goal. Another variation is to limit the goals to be considered to: education, employment, and/or one's personal life.

EXPECTED OUTCOME

Of all the exercises, this series is the most difficult for most persons because it represents a shift from past to present to future, and because it involves making a commitment to a course of action. All previous exercises have provided some information to the participants concerning

their skills and values, which must be considered when setting future goals.

Participants will initially set very vague goals, such as "improve my personality" or "obtain a meaningful job." The facilitator needs to intervene, when that occurs, and ask the individual to be more specific, until a realistic tangible goal is articulated.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES Occupational Investigation, Mock Interview.

# WHAT DO I WANT TO DO?

GOAL SETTING

PART I

It is important to have goals when you are making life choices for today and tomorrow. They are especially important for giving direction to your energy and for determining how you will spend your time. Setting goals can be a way of getting things moving, and they can be a yardstick against which to measure progress.

Describe some aims or goals you have had in the past, indicating whether or not you attained them.

| Goal | Attained | Not Attained |
|---|---|---|
| _____ | ___ | ___ |
| _____ | ___ | ___ |
| _____ | ___ | ___ |
| _____ | ___ | ___ |
| _____ | ___ | ___ |
| _____ | ___ | ___ |
| _____ | ___ | ___ |
| _____ | ___ | ___ |
| _____ | ___ | ___ |
| _____ | ___ | ___ |

GOAL SETTING

PART II

To help you determine meaningful goals for yourself, complete the following:

What you'd like to happen in one year

List here things you would like to learn to do, satisfying activities you'd like to be involved in, and things you want to strive toward during the next year. Keeping your values in mind, think in terms of occupations, leisure time, family, education, etc.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

What you'd like to happen in one month

List here things you would like to learn to do, activities you'd like to be involved in, and things you want to strive toward during the next month. Some of these may be duplications of your first list.

_____

_____

_____

_____

GOAL SETTING

PART III

To help you set realistic goals, complete the following:

What you do well - your strengths

List here the things you do well. Sometimes this is a difficult list to complete because we are brought up to be modest, to minimize what we do well in exchange for being popular or being liked and loved by others.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

What you do poorly - your personal shortcomings

List here the things you do poorly or that cause you concern. Look back at your list of what you would like to happen in one year and see if you can tell whether the things that cause you concern may be obstacles to your attaining those goals.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

GOAL SETTING

PART IV

Now take this information about yourself and convert it into statements of goals that express what you want. Select at least one item from your list of what you would like to happen in one year and at least one item from your list of what you would like to happen in one month.

| What is your goal ? | What are some specific steps (objectives) you can take toward reaching your goal ? | When do you want to attain this goal ? |
|---|---|---|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

AIDS TO SUCCESSFUL GOAL SETTING

The following questions should be asked as a goal is being set:

1. Is the goal achievable?
   a. Can I accomplish it in the time span I have set?
   b. Does the achievement of the goal depend only on me, and not on conditions outside of me?

2. Do I believe I can achieve this goal?
   a. Are my skills and abilities equal to this goal?

3. Will I know when I have done it?
   a. Have I set my goal in specific terms?

4. Do I want to do it?
   a. Is the goal one that interests me?

5. Is the goal presented without an alternative?
   a. Have I made a decision?
   b. Am I focused in on what I will be doing?

6. Is the goal motivating to me?

7. Is the goal of value to me?
   a. Is the goal compatible with my values?

# ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

The following section of the program guide includes exercises which may be used in conjunction with the core program activities. The exercises have been categorized into two basic emphasis areas - self-assessment and career planning. Also contained in this section are sample evaluation forms which may be used in a life planning program and a selected list of books to which a facilitator may refer for additional ideas on program activities.

Self Assessment Exercise I

ATTITUDES TOWARD WORK

GOAL To examine and identify the attitudes of participants toward work.

DURATION 20-30 minutes.

MATERIALS Participant handout, "Attitudes Toward Work."

DIRECTIONS

Initiate a discussion of the meaning of the word, "work." Ask how many think of work in terms of a paid job. Ask for other definitions of "work." The reality for many people may be that their important life work involves family, community action, leisure time activities, etc., but does not provide a financial income. For the majority of people, their job is merely what they do to support themselves and others.

Ask the participants to fill out the "Attitudes Toward Work" handout. This can be done individually or in pairs with participants interviewing each other. Allow about five minutes for completion.

Then ask for feed-back of the participants' responses to the questions. Encourage discussion about life priorities by asking the following questions:

Is it necessary to always find a job that satisfies those priorities?

What trade-offs are there for satisfying those needs outside the work structure?

If you were asked these questions five years ago, would you have responded differently?

EXPECTED OUTCOME

This exercise offers participants the opportunity to assess realistically how they feel about work and leisure time. There will be diverse responses to the questions because people differ in their approaches and attitudes toward work. What is important for each person is an understanding of one's own value system so that decisions one makes can be "customized" to the individual need. The attitudes held today may not be the same as those held in the past or those accepted in the future. Our priorities shift throughout life. This exercise should be related to job goals that the participants are considering, i.e. the kinds of rewards one seeks from life are not always what many jobs can offer.

Self Assessment Exercise

ATTITUDES TOWARD WORK

1. How do you feel about the whole idea of work? Check the area on the following scale which most closely represents your feelings.

Hate Work — Like Work

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

2. How important will your work be compared to your present or future family concerns? Place yourself on the scale below.

Family All-Important — Work All-Important

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

3. If and when you go to work, will your primary objective be intrinsic (i.e. self-fulfillment, use of abilities, personal satisfaction, etc.) or will you be seeking extrinsic objectives (i.e. external rewards such as money, security, power, recognition) ?

Intrinsic — Extrinsic

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

4. Would you work if you didn't have to? ( ) Yes ( ) No

Explain _____

_____

Self Assessment Exercise

ATTITUDES TOWARD WORK

5. Do you expect to be fulfilled by your career? ( ) Yes ( ) No

   Explain _____

   _____

6. Do you make a distinction between work and leisure? Explain below.

   _____

   _____

7. If you were to decide not to work ( that is, if you had the choice to make and did not have to work for a living ) how would you spend your time? Explain _____

   _____

   _____

8. What are your chief life priorities outside of work?

   a. _____

   b. _____

   c. _____

   d. _____

   e. _____

   f. _____

*From: The Inventurers: Excursions in Life and Career Planning. Janet Hagberg and Richard Leider, 1978.*

Self Assessment Exercise II

WHY DO I WORK ?

GOAL To assist participants in identifying which of their needs must be met in a work setting.

DURATION 20-30 minutes.

MATERIALS Paricipant handout, "Why Do I Work?".

DIRECTIONS

It is important to know what you want from a work situation before you determine what kind of work you might prefer to do. To discover this, it helps to begin by examining those situations in which you have enjoyed spending time and energy and identifying which needs you were able to meet.

Assist participants by asking each to share at least one positive job experience they have had in the past year. That job may have been paid or non-paid work.

Following the group discussion, distribute the participant handout and go over the instructions as a group. Ask participants to complete Column A only, followed by a brief group discussion before proceeding to the next step in the exercise.

Ranking values can be anxiety-producing. One way to lessen that anxiety is to begin the exercise with the least important work-related need and progress toward the most important work-related need. In completing Columns B, C, and D, refer to the information shared in the discussion of positive job experiences. Encourage discussion based upon responses.

VARIATION

Another method of identifying the ideal work setting is to take participants on a Job Fantasy Trip. Ask them to write down what they would really like to do if they could ignore all possible barriers. After they have "named" their "dream" occupation, direct them to close their eyes for a few minutes and visualize themselves in that situation. Ask them to identify what they are doing; what other people are there and what they are doing;what special training, skills and abilities they need; what is important to them about what they are doing; which of their values, interests, abilities relate to this occupation; and what alternative occupation they might consider. Is what they want still a dream, or is it a possibility?

EXPECTED OUTCOME

Participants will be able to see where their current priorities are, which needs are most important to them, and what they feel they really want from a job to justify expending their time and energy. A by-product of any exercise providing for discussion of job experiences is the possibility for introduction of new information and ideas which can benefit the job hunter. The variety of reasons for which people seek employment helps to highlight the variety of job-inherent awards possible.

Self Assessment Exercise

WHY DO I WORK ?

Consider the following 14 work-related needs. In Column A, rank your work value preferences from 1-14 in order of importance to you. By the end of this exercise, you should be able to say, "I need _____ more than _____ and _____ more than _____." Think of your needs in terms of the work setting, rather than your over-all personal needs.

| | A | B | C | D |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Recognition and approval (self and work known and approved by others) | | | | |
| Variety (new and different things) | | | | |
| Socioeconomic status (meet standards with respect to material matters) | | | | |
| Dependence (work guided by others) | | | | |
| Economic security ( assurance of continuing income) | | | | |
| Interpersonal relations (acceptance and belongingness with other people) | | | | |
| Mastery, skill, and achievement (do a task well according to one's own standards) | | | | |
| Independence ( direct one's own behavior) | | | | |
| Service and social welfare (have one's efforts result in benefits to others) | | | | |
| Leadership and personal power (direct and have influence over others) | | | | |
| Adventure (situations with risk and change) | | | | |

Self Assessment Exercise

WHY DO I WORK ?

| | A | B | C | D |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Creativity and challenge (meet new problems, produce new and original work) | | | | |
| Self expression (behavior consistent with self-concept) | | | | |
| Moral code ( behavior consistent with moral code) | | | | |

Compare your preferences (Column A) with your work experiences (Columns B, C, and D). Answer the following questions:

1. In my present work, I need more _____, _____ and _____. I'm getting enough _____ and _____.

2. My present job's work values and reward structures show that what I do is worth spending part of my life on. Yes ___ No ___

Comment: _____

3. My future work will require _____, _____ and _____.

4. My idea of "good work" is _____.

*From: The Inventurers:Excursions in Life and Career Renewal. Janet Hagberg and Richard Leider, 1978.*

Self Assessment Exercise III

## JOURNAL WRITING

GOAL To introduce participants to the journal writing process as a means of articulating an unstructured and creative definition of one's self and environment.

DURATION 30-45 minutes.

MATERIALS Several sheets of blank paper for each participant.

DIRECTIONS

Discuss with participants their experiences in writing a journal or keeping a diary. Ask participants to list five to ten people who have played significant roles in their lives. These persons can be family members, friends, co-workers, community leaders, childhood heroes or heroines, etc. From the list, ask each group member to focus upon one person they have listed. Now, ask the participants to list the critical events which they think shaped that person's life. Then instruct the group members to write a letter or memo to the person they selected. The facilitator may ask these questions to motivate the participants to begin:

What would you like to tell this person?

What feelings, information, and ideas do you want to share?

Remind the participants that they have the option of delivering the letter to whom it is addressed, of sharing the letter with the group, or of keeping the letter for personal reference or destroying it.

After allowing about ten minutes for the participants to complete this exercise, initiate discussion by asking the following questions:

How did it feel to write your letter?

Would you consider delivering it to the person for whom it is intended?

What tone did your letter take - anger, support?

Would you care to read any part of it to this group?

Discussing the process of writing and sharing the contents are very important aspects of this exercise. Spelling, grammar, and composition are not important. The process of expressing feelings on paper is what makes this exercise meaningful.

VARIATION

To enable participants to focus upon their feelings, read the following series of open-ended statements. Ask the group members to complete the phrase as you read it. To be effective, the list must be read at a fast pace (30 seconds-one minute per statement).

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| I like . . . | Teachers . . . | I avoid . . . |
| At night . . . | I need . . . | I fear . . . |
| I consider myself . . . | When I'm alone . . . | Children . . . |
| I am closest . . . | I look forward . . . | I hate . . . |
| What annoys me. . . | Sexual relationships . . . | Math . . . |
| My grades . . . | My health . . . | My home . . . |
| People consider me . . . | School . . . | I wish people . . . |
| My greatest joy . . . | Secretly I would like . . . | I sometimes think . |

Process the responses by reading through the list again and asking participants to call out their individual answers. A list which you develop yourself, or as a group, may be used.

A follow-up exercise could require participants to write a letter to themselves, with the facilitator actually mailing the letters in one week's time.

One book about journal writing, which could suggest other appropriate exercises to use with the group, is Keeping Your Personal Journal by George Simmons, Paulist Press, 1978. As Simmons states in that book:

> *Anyone can keep a journal. You don't have to be famous. You don't have to be a great writer. You don't need a lot of time or profound psychological insights. A journal is a simple thing. It is a way each person can come to a clearer sense of himself or herself through gentle and non-threatening process. It can also be a source of freedom, relaxation, and fun.*

EXPECTED OUTCOME

This exercise is an introduction to journal writing. One of the valuable aspects of this techniques with ABE students is the exposure to non-threatening writing experience. Journal writing provides a means of self-exploration, self-monitoring, and communication. It is particularly helpful to persons in transition since it documents their progress and growth. A sense of increased self esteem accompanies the reading of one's own written words and sharing those words, and the experience, with others.

Career Planning Exercise I

## OCCUPATIONAL INVESTIGATION

GOAL To obtain primary contact with persons employed in various occupational fields and to identify qualifications and work conditions of specific jobs.

DURATION Variable.

MATERIALS Participant handout, "Suggested Questions to Use During Occupational Investigation."

DIRECTIONS

This is an exercise which participants do independent research on a particular job category or position and report their findings to the group. Participants should select an occupation that they have considered for themselves. The occupation does not have to be one for which the group member is currently qualified. The facilitator assigns each participant the responsibility of making an appointment with a person employed in the occupation the participant has chosen. The participant, during that appointment, is expected to obtain information about the job and how the person being interviewed obtained employment in that field. A suggested list of questions should be distributed to participants before the interview takes place.

The facilitator acts as a resource in identifying personal and professional contacts who work in the job fields being investigated. Participants should be encouraged to present their requests for informal interviews under the auspices of a program class assignment. Remind the participants that they will be acting as interviewers and seeking information, not employment.

Direct the group members to report back to the group after they have interviewed their occupational contact. Ask them to discuss at that time:

The specific information about occupation, e.g. qualifications, working conditions, salary, etc.;

The way their contact viewed her/his position, e.g. personal involvement;

What the participant discovered about his/her previous expectations about the job, e.g. can the participant still picture this job as a goal worth achieving, or did the interview change that perception?

EXPECTED OUTCOME

Many participants will need encouragement to initiate the required contact with a potential interviewee. The important point to stress is that the group members are involved in research for themselves and all other members of the group. Expect significant impact upon participants who follow through on this assignment. Focus on Choice experience has found that the participant will discover either that the job objective has been enthusiastically reinforced or that the job objective is unrealistic. Another outcome which occurred during Focus on Choice was the development by the participant of job contacts during this process. The "interviewee" is often flattered to be the subject of investigation and offers information of job availability as well as the responses to the participant's enquiry. This teaches the participant that potential jobs exist which are not advertised. This develops a contact network and job leads for the group member, as well as the possibility of a job offer resulting from the encounter.

Career Planning Exercise

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS FOR USE DURING OCCUPATIONAL INVESTIGATION

1. Title of occupation:_____

2. Description of work done on-job:

3. How would you describe the working conditions of this job (e.g. with people, with "things", flexible hours, etc,)?

4. Training, education, and experience required:

5. How did you get this job? Did you always want to do this kind of work?

6. What is the average starting salary for a position like yours?

7. What are the personal advantages to this job?

   What are the disadvantages?

8. How did you acqu're the skills needed for this job? Did you learn them on the job or before?

9. How do you and the occupation "fit"?

10. What would you recommend to someone who is interested in obtaining employment in your line of work?

11. Ask for any brochures or company promotional material.

Career Planning Exercise II

USE OF COMMUNITY "CONSULTANTS"

GOAL To provide participants with exposure to role models who can relate to them on a personal level.

DURATION 30 minutes.

MATERIALS None.

DIRECTIONS

The Focus on Choice project involved a great number of guest consultants who visited the sessions to share three things with the group:

Their experience in personal growth associated with educational/ employment decisions;

The types of support groups which helped them through transition periods;

Special information and expertise which they had developed in their field of employment that would be of interest to participants.

A half-hour informal talk by a guest consultant was scheduled periodically throughout the Focus on Choice series.

Consultants who had previously been enrolled in adult education programs and had gone on to higher education or meaningful employment were most effective as role models. Facilitators may also want to consider inviting representatives from various community service agencies to share their personal and professional growth histories. Participants should be encouraged to dialogue with the guest about employment opportunities and the necessary qualifications for his/her field.

VARIATION

Invite a panel of service providers to a session with a planned agenda during which information about each panel member's educational and employment experiences is presented.

EXPECTED OUTCOME

For participants who have been out of school or employment for an extended time, this exercise can help diminish a common tendency to assume that it is easy for other persons to achieve some measure of success. "Peer" consultants can also identify with the difficulties of setting goals and exerting efforts to accomplish those goals. The point remains that defining one's direction is a challenge for everyone, regardless of current status. This exposure to role models is usually a very encouraging - sometimes, inspiring - event for participants.

Career Planning Exercise III

## RESUME WRITING

GOAL To develop a concise statement of participants' skill histories and an objective for employing those skills.

DURATION 60-90 minutes.

MATERIALS Participant handouts: "General Hints for Resume Preparation", "Key Words for Resume Preparation", and "Sample Format for Functional Resume."

DIRECTIONS

This exercise is more effective when used after the completion of the "What Can I Do" Skills Assessment Exercise. The resume can be developed during a session when the participants focus upon translating their skills or experiences into qualifications for a particular area of employment. Another option is to direct participants to bring to the group session a rough draft of their resume to be refined with group assistance. If this approach is used, pair-up the participants so they can critique each other's resume.

It is not important that the participants have a particular position in mind. It is important that they focus upon a particular field while developing their resumes, e.g. health field, auto mechanics, business,etc. The facilitator should assemble a few sample resumes, either fictitious or actual ones, for the group members to review before the exercise begins.

The Focus on Choice staff has found the best approach to a session on resume writing is to invite someone from a personnel department as a guest speaker. The professional experience of such a resource person as a "receiver of resumes" is extremely valuable.

Since the Skills Assessment Exercise assists participants in identifying what life experiences contain job-related skills, encourage the participants to utilize that information, and the specific words from the exercise, on their resumes.

There are two basic approaches to a resume: the conventional resume and the functional resume. The conventional resume serves the person well who has had fairly extensive experience in a series of well-defined, clearly understood jobs, such as managing an agency, supervising a work crew, or doing sales work. It uses the historical approach, beginning with the most recent experiences and tracing backward. The functional resume stresses the strengths and accomplishments a person has to offer, rather than a chronological work history. Work experience is organized under the headings, "Skills" or "Function", rather than in time blocks or by company of employment. It is ideal for the person who is entering the job market for the first time, or who has been unemployed for a number of years, or is interested in changing fields.

This exercise may be very beneficial, particularly when participants help one another by reviewing the resumes of others and offering suggestions on content and format. Reviewing of the resumes may also be arranged, perhaps on an individual appointment basis, should a personnel consultant acting as guest speaker for the session be willing.

VARIATION

Some participants may want to concentrate on job application forms rather than resumes. General application forms can be obtained from the state employment agency or community businesses. Some facilitators may want to include both job application forms and resume forms in the exercise. It has been the experience of Focus on Choice that the resume is more effective as a concrete document to which participants can refer at that later date when they are seeking employment. Another variation of the exercise would be to direct the group in the development of a "collective resume", listing the group objective(s) and skill histories of group members. This is an effective bonding technique, fun to do, and excellent practice for actual resume formation.

EXPECTED OUTCOME

Do not expect a finished product as a result of this exercise. Do expect participants to gain an understanding of how their skills can be applied to employment objectives. Some will want to spend additional time in refining their resumes. This exercise is a beginning step for them and the facilitator may need to spend time outside session hours to assist them in resume development. The main benefit to all group members is the presence of resume reviewers and doing the task together.

Career Planning Exercise

## GENERAL HINTS FOR RESUME PREPARATION

1. Fit your resume on one page, if at all possible.
   - -The resume should be an attention-getter that attracts the curiosity of the reader; it should not be your life story.

2. Be neat!
   - -It is important that all words are spelled correctly and typing is neat and clear.
   - -Use good quality paper.
   - -Plan margins and layout of the content for a distinctive, attractive piece of work.

3. Consider professional printing.
   - -This is not as expensive as it may sound. You usually can get 100 professionally produced copies for less than $10.00.

4. Use positive, action-oriented wording.
   - -Your resume should show what you can do, not what can be done for you.
   - -Use past tense.
   - -Avoid beginning sentences with "I".

5. Avoid being overly humble.
   - -Blow your horn! This is no time for humility. Put your best foot forward in a straight-forward, objective manner. But, avoid overdoing it to the point of sounding boastful or obnoxious.

Career Planning Exercise

SAMPLE FORMAT FOR FUNCTIONAL RESUME

---

Name
Address
Phone

Job Objective: Narrative; try to be specific.

Skills: Experience related to job objective

Work Experience: This may be volunteer and/or life experience.

Education: Completed education and educational goals.

Personal Data: Birth date optional; marital status optional.

References: These may be included now, enclosed with a cover letter, or a statement included at the bottom of the resume stating, "Available Upon Request."

Career Planning Exercise

## KEY WORDS FOR RESUME PREPARATION

Employers want to know what you can do - not what can be done to you! Use the Action Words listed to tell what you can do. The Self-Descriptive Words below should be carefully selected to give the employer as precise a picture as possible of the type of personality and work traits you possess.

### Action Words

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| actively | eliminated | managed | reorganized |
| accelerated | established | motivated | revamped |
| adapted | evaluated | organized | revised |
| administered | expanded | originated | reviewed |
| analyzed | expedited | participated | scheduled |
| approved | founded | performed | simplified |
| coordinated | generated | planned | set up |
| conceived | increased | pinpointed | solved |
| conducted | influenced | programmed | strategized |
| completed | implemented | proposed | streamlined |
| controlled | interpreted | proved | successfully |
| created | improved | provided | supervised |
| delegated | launched | proficient | supported |
| demonstrated | led | recommended | taught |
| directed | lectured | reduced | developed |
| effected | maintained | reinforced | cooperated with |

### Self-Descriptive Words

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| active | determined | independent | realistic |
| adaptable | diplomatic | logical | reliable |
| aggressive | disciplined | loyal | resourceful |
| alert | discreet | mature | respectful |
| ambitious | economical | methodical | self-reliant |
| analytical | efficient | objective | sincere |
| attentive | energetic | optimistic | sophisticated |
| broad-minded | enterprising | perceptive | sense-of-humor |
| conscientious | enthusiastic | personable | systematic |
| consistent | extroverted | pleasant | tactful |
| constructive | fair | positive | talented |
| creative | forceful | practical | will travel |
| dependable | imaginative | productive | will relocate |

Career Planning Exercise IV

## MOCK INTERVIEWING

GOAL To gain experience in interviewing techniques.

DURATION 45-60 minutes.

MATERIALS Participant handout, "Mock Interview Sample Questions"; newspaper help wanted ads and/or a list of contrived job descriptions.

DIRECTIONS

Contact someone who regularly interviews job applicants at her/his place of employment and ask her/him to conduct a role-play interview with voluntary participants at a group session. The interviewer may be able to provide a list of questions she/he commonly asks of all applicants. If so, this list should be distributed to the group members prior to the sessions so they may prepare answers. The interviewer should be given a list of the "jobs" which the participants are seeking prior to the mock interview, also. Suggest to the interviewer that her/his positive and negative critique comments of each interviewee's responses will be requested after the session. Should the interviewer be unable to provide a list of interview questions, use the "Mock Interview Sample Questions" handout as a preparation guideline for the participants.

Prior to the session, distribute help wanted ads and/or job descriptions. Allow the participants to select one job for which they would would like to apply. If they have resumes prepared, suggest that they provide a copy

for the interviewer. Have the "interviewer" and the "applicant" conduct the mock interview in front of the entire group. After each interview sequence, encourage the observers (other group participants) to comment on what was said and how the participant said it. The facilitator should ask for both positive reinforcing statements and "needs improvement" comments. After the session, arrange for personal consultations between the interviewer and those participants who request personal reactions by her/him.

VARIATION

If a community employment consultant is not available, either the facilitator or another group participant could role-play the part of the interviewer. Participants may re-enact an interview which they have experienced during former employment searches.

EXPECTED OUTCOME

Initially, participants may treat this as a role-play and, consequently, effectiveness may be hindered. It's important to conduct the interview as realistically and seriously as possible, with the support of the other group members coming only after the "interview." It is very anxiety-producing for some individuals to participate in this exercise, and participation should not be mandatory. For those who voluntarily participate, this activity is beneficial in preparing them for real-life job interviews. Participants should be encouraged to state their own qualifications for a job, thus building upon and reinforcing the skills assessment exercise(s).

Career Planning Exercise

MOCK INTERVIEW SAMPLE QUESTIONS

1. We're looking for a qualified applicant for the position of _____. Tell me why you are interested in applying for this position.

2. What kinds of paid or volunteer work experience have you had which relates to this position?

3. Have you had education or training in this field? Are you presently enrolled in any courses?

4. Everyone has some strengths and weaknesses. What are yours?

5. What are your extracurricular or leisure time activities (e.g. community organizations, hobbies, etc.) ?

6. What are your career objectives over the next few years?

7. Tell me what you liked about and learned from your past jobs (paid and volunteer).

8. Do you have any questions about this position?

## SAMPLE EVALUATION FORMS

Ongoing evaluation for each session is important in providing the facilitators with needed feedback to modify the program design based upon participant reactions. One method is the Quick Critique where you go around the group twice providing each participant first with an opportunity to say something negative about what has transpired during the session. Then each participant has an opportunity to say something positive about the session. These responses should be recorded on a chalkboard or flip chart. The negatives require a response by the facilitator. This process allows the facilitator to get immediate feedback and to answer questions about content or format. It also allows the participants to hear the reactions of their peers.

In addition, it is helpful to use written evaluation form after each session and after the entire series. The following two forms are suggested formats for recording participants input.

Date_____

Seminar Evaluation Form

Session No._____

Directions: Check the appropriate column which best expresses your reaction to the question.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | How would you describe today's session? | good | fair | poor |
| 2. | How important were the problems discussed? | very | somewhat | not-at-all |
| 3. | How much did you learn? | a great deal | little | nothing |
| 4. | Did the facilitator stay on the subject? | very much | somewhat | hardly-at-all |
| 5. | To what extent were your expectations met from today's seminar? | completely | partially | not-at-all |
| 6. | How significant was the information presented today? | very | somewhat | not-at-all |
| 7. | How useful for you were the materials which were used in today's session? | very | somewhat | not-at-all |
| 8. | Of what personal value were the skills presented today? | very | somewhat | not-at-all |

9. What was the most important aspect of today's session?

10. What could have been added or subtracted from today's topic to improve the quality or content of the session?

Added:

Subtracted:

FINAL SELF-INVENTORY

This questionnaire is designed to determine if you feel that any changes have occurred in your ability to view your skills, abilities and goals. Please mark the phrase on the right side of the page which would best describe your opinion.

| MY ABILITY TO: | Improved greatly | Improved somewhat | Not changed | Declined somewhat | Declined greatly |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. define the values that are important to me has | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 2. understand my needs has | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 3. balance my needs with my responsibilities has | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 4. sort out alternatives in relation to my future has | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 5. judge possible outcomes of my alternatives has | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 6. set priorities for future action has | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 7. take risks for a desired plan of action has | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 8. define my skills has | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 9. obtain the necessary information about job opportunties has | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 10. learn about educational opportunties has | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 11. appreciate the need for planning my future has | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 12. feel more confident about my qualities and potential has | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 13. determine a satisfying and realistic job to match my abilities has | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 14. understand myself has | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ |

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